ELLIS ISLAND
ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

March 2003

Approved by:

_____ Date: _____

John Metcalfe
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

_____ Date: _____

Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Ellis Island Ecological Reserve
Purpose Statement

The Ellis Island Ecological Reserve is located in Fraser Lake, 42 km west of Vanderhoof, adjacent to Highway 16. The ecological reserve encompasses the whole of Ellis Island, less than 1 ha in size, and protects a vulnerable gull nesting colony for research purposes.

Fraser Lake, about 50 km^2 in size, drains eastward into the Nechako River. Ellis Island, 600 m from its southern shore, is low and egg-shaped. Much of the surface of this heavily glaciated island is bare rock.

The major feature of the ecological reserve is its nesting colony of herring and ring-billed gulls. The island is one of only two ring-billed gull colonies in the province. The species has been nesting here since 1985. In addition, Caspian terns nest on the island, one of only four nesting locales for the species in the province. The only other occurrences of the species as a breeding bird are at two locations on the Fraser River delta, and at Shuswap Lake. There may be no more than 45 pairs breeding in the province.

Common loons, mallards, northern pintails, spotted sandpipers and common crows also nest on the island. Other birds seen, some of which probably nest, include the Rufous hummingbird, tree swallow, orange-crowned warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, Wilson's warbler, savannah sparrow and ruddy turnstone.

Vegetation is comprised of scrubby aspen - cottonwood stands with a dense shrub understory, dense shrub thickets, and grassy areas. Most of the gull nests are on rocky sites on the northwest part of the island.

The ecological reserve was established in March 1991.

Primary Role
The primary role of Ellis Island Ecological Reserve is to protect a vulnerable gull nesting colony for research purposes.

Known Management Issues	Response
Recreational use impacts on bird nesting and vegetation cover	Monitor recreational use and resulting impacts. The ecological reserve has been signed requesting boaters not to land on the island. Information should be provided within the schools and community regarding the impacts of visiting the ecological reserve. Investigate the need to close the island to public access, at least during the breeding season.
No presence	Requires an Ecological Reserve Warden or Stewardship Group who ideally live on Fraser Lake.

CONSERVATION

Representation
- ecosection
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

Special Feature	X	Island with special values for bird nesting
Rare/Endangered Values	X	Caspian Tern (blue-listed) breeding site
Scientific/Research Opportunities	X	Ring-billed gull colonies; Gull/tern nesting

RECREATION

Representation:
- backcountry
- destination
- travel corridor
- local recreation

Special Opportunities

Education/Interpretation Opportunities	X	Bird nesting

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation

Special Feature

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations

Relationship to Other PAs

Co-operative Management Arrangements		Consideration should be given to the development of a stewardship arrangement with the Nad'leh Bun Watershed Enhancement Society.
Partnerships		Requires a local Ecological Reserve Warden.
Vulnerability	X	The small gull/tern colony is vulnerable to disturbance by people landing on the island. The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape and the size of the ecological

reserve) for the ecological reserve and rated them as moderately significant. One stressor/threat was identified for the ecological reserve: boat/all types which was rated as highly significant.

Relationship to Other Strategies

Area: 1 hectare

Date of establishment: March 28, 1991